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The Educational Council

CHARLES H. FARNSWORTH, Chairman

In response to the Editor's request for a report of the work of the Council, little can be said of a definite nature, though members of the Council, extremely busy as they are, are working on two problems.

The first of these problems is in relation of a questionnaire which the Council has been promised would be sent out by the United States Bureau of Education, the purpose being to gather information along three lines: First, as to what expense school systems are going into for the sake of music, both running expenses and investment; second, how much time they are allowing for music instruction; and third, what is being accomplished, and what recognition is given along lines of advancement and credit.

The immediate request for the questionnaire comes from our president, Mr. Beach. He feels that there is a tendency, during these hard times, to economize on music, as music is looked upon in most places not as an essential in the center, but as occupying a more ornamental position in the circumference. The financial state of affairs that is requiring retrenchment naturally tends to affect music seriously, and it is hoped by a strong presentation of what is already being done to show school authorities the importance of the subject in some schools of the country.

There are three types of people whom we wish especially to reach: those who have not yet made any provision for systematic music work—and this group is very large when we include the rural schools—second, those who have done a little toward music but are inclined to sacrifice it when there is pressure for economy; and third, those who, while keeping music systematically in the schools, give so little time and money for car-

rying it on that the subject has but half a chance to show its value in the system. All three of these classes would be stimulated to a better appreciation of the value of music, if they could see how extensively many of the best schools of the country give both time and money to cultivating the art.

The main difficulty in accomplishing the desired result is in getting the questionnaire adequately answered. There is where the readers of the JOURNAL will be of great help, not only in answering fully themselves, but in inducing their fellow-supervisors to do the same. Every one realizes the extra burden it puts on a busy person to think over and answer a list of questions; and while there is no doubt that many questionnaires fail to give adequate returns for the favors they seek, it can not be denied that the great progress that has been made in realizing the needs of education in the country has been largely based on investigations, of which the chief instrument for gathering the facts has been the questionnaire. In fact, the subject of getting such inquiries out has become an art in itself, and the leading universities are giving courses of study showing how to conduct them effectively.

While in conversation, especially with one whom the speaker knows, opinion is one of the most important means of getting information, opinion in a questionnaire is worthless; hence the need of often using incidents which in themselves seem unimportant, but which, by their tabulation, may indicate tendencies that are of the utmost importance to observe. A straw may be quite as valuable to indicate the direction of the tide in the harbor, as the swinging of an ironclad.

The second matter that the Council

has on the docket, is the question already alluded to in an article in the last issue; namely, 'the determining of standards and scales of measurement. The subject is often underestimated by those who, through long years of experience, have learned to tell instantly what an individual or a class is accomplishing; and they naturally do not see the need of any complex machinery for accomplishing what they do almost unconsciously themselves. The need for exact definition of terms, however, is seen when we attempt to communicate our ideas to others. Here again, where one knows the speaker, his terms can be evaluated and their meaning understood. But the vast majority of those who wish information have no such possibility of weighing the statements of those who write books and articles. Some objective standard of what is meant by the terms used is absolutely essential, if real educational information is to be disseminated.

How much need there is for such definition of terms is well illustrated by the following quotation from Mr. Courtis, Director of Instruction, Teachers' Training and Research, at Detroit: a dozen definitions of what different people have meant by the term "reading." When we consider that this is a subject that has been fundamental in our schools for generations, one would think that by this time there would be a pretty thorough consensus of opinion about what "reading" means. Here are the answers given to the question, "What does knowing how to read mean?"—

1. Ability to recognize silently the general meaning of words of a given range of difficulty.
2. Ability to "sound" correctly a given set of words.
3. Ability to read aloud smoothly and with proper expression (without regard to whether the meaning is understood or not).
4. Ability to read silently and to

understand enough of the meaning to be interested in what is read.

5. Ability to read silently and comprehend the essential relations existing between the essential elements of what is read.

6. Ability to read either silently or orally, and tell in one's own words the substance of what has been read.

7. Ability to read instructions, either silently or orally, and be able to act in accordance with them.

8. Ability to read again and again (study) until one has mastered the contents of a passage, so that one can answer questions about it, or use the information in solving problems.

9. Ability to read a passage and be stirred emotionally by its aesthetic elements.

10. Ability to read a passage and make judgments as to its style and merit as a piece of "good English."

11. Ability to read a passage and interpret the allusions which it contains.

12. Ability to read a passage and interpret the mood, ideas, or ideals of the author.

It will be seen from the above answers that the question of ordinary reading is looked upon from many different points of view. How much more this is true when we come to the reading of music, in connection with which the artistic delivery is so important. How far shall the reading be simply a correct reproduction of the pitch and time values presented, and how far shall the resultant musical movement itself be comprehended? Such questions should bring up many shades of opinion in relation to music reading. There is a profound difference in the way we read ordinary print from the way we read music. In the former, the reading process is casual most of the time; our eyes have merely to glance over a column, just to know what is there. But in reading music, the first operation, in ninety-nine cases out of a

hundred, is only the beginning of a practice which has for its purpose more or less artistic production and many repetitions of the passage, resulting in memory coming in to such an extent, that after the first trial or two, little real reading goes on. While reading music is much harder than reading print, the need for accomplishing it as readily is not by any means as great.

Merely to indicate the grade of difficulty of a piece to be read at sight does not fulfill the need, simply because there are so many ways of considering what reading at sight is. It may be individual without accompaniment or any help; it may be individual with accompaniment, or after opportunity has been given to look at the material; or it may be in chorus, with or without accompaniment; and may even be called sight reading when the real effective production does not occur until at least a number of trials have been made. It would be of great value to have specific grades of reading designated, not only as to types of compositions, but as to conditions under which the reading should be carried out.

The foregoing represents, however, only one aspect of school music teaching. The cultivation of taste, acquaintance with musical literature, that would be likely to function in the mature life of the child, the awakening of interest in forms of music other than the vocal, are all questions, the extent of which needs to be determined by scales and measurements sufficiently, to know what is meant when requirements are spoken of.

NATIONAL WEEK OF SONG

FEBRUARY 19 TO 25

The National Week of Song, which has been pretty generally observed throughout the country for a number of years, will take place this year during the week beginning February 19th.

Briefly stated by Mr. Norman H.

Hall, Executive Secretary of the National Week of Song, "It is a movement in the interest of Community singing, a movement to help make America a singing nation. It assists in awakening and developing a national patriotic spirit, to amalgamate our people, to inspire them with high ideals, and to teach them to love good songs and good singing."

The National Week of Song has already been a success in a nation-wide sense, in that it has been observed in communities in every part of the country, but those who have promoted it will not be content until it is observed in every village and hamlet, and in every city and town in the entire country.

In planning to observe The National Week of Song in your community, the first thing to do is to secure the co-operation of every organization and institution that is interested in civic welfare. The choruses and their leaders, the schools, the women's clubs, the Rotary, Kiwanis, and other men's clubs, your community center organizations and civic clubs, your Chambers of Commerce, and other organizations as have for their duty the development of the civic and national spirit. The theaters and churches will also be found working together in this great movement.

One of the great purposes of the movement is to acquaint the people of every community with songs of the better sort—songs that are elevating, the best of our national and patriotic songs, our home and folk songs, and the best of the world's inspirational, sentimental and classical songs. Therefore, to be in harmony with the true spirit of the occasion, do not include any of the worthless sort.

Another thing to be remembered is the real name of the event. Notice that it is *The National Week of Song*, and not the Week of National Song, or National Song Week, as has sometimes been suggested.